

19

WAS THE ROMAN ARMY

PROVIDED WITH

MEDICAL OFFICERS?

BY

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MDCCCLVI.

Mulcere dolores
Deficio, medicasque manus fomentaque quero
Vulneribus.

INSCRIBED

TO

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ETC. ETC. ETC.

AS A

SMALL TRIBUTE OF SINCERE ESTEEM,

FROM

AN OLD AND ATTACHED PUPIL.

PREFATORY NOTE.

A FEW years ago, my late colleague, Sir George Ballingall, asked me, "Was the Roman Army provided with Medical Officers?" He was interested in the subject as Professor of Military Surgery, and told me that he had made, quite unsuccessfully, inquiries on the matter in various quarters and at various persons. I drew up for him a few remarks, which were privately printed and circulated among his class at the time. The present Essay consists of an extension of these remarks.

EDINBURGH, *27th July*, 1856.

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LITTLE or nothing has hitherto been written by archæologists regarding the medical staff of the Roman army. Indeed, in none of our common works on Roman antiquities, as in those of Rossini, Kennet, Adams, Smith, Ramsay, etc., is there any allusion whatever made to the question, whether or not the Roman troops were furnished with medical officers. In one anonymous work on Roman antiquities, translated from the French, and published in London in 1750, the subject is referred to, the author stating, that during the commonwealth there were no physicians in the Roman armies; and he adds, that even under the Emperors, "it does not appear there were any physicians in the armies, as there are surgeons in ours."¹ Nor does there exist, as far as I am aware, in the Roman classics, any very distinct allusion to the matter. I have also, in vain, searched among Roman medical authors, and among the writings of the Greek physicians who practised at Rome, for any direct notices, relative to the medical or surgical care of the numerous and scattered armies employed by Rome in the different quarters of the world. In fact, the only passages, with which I am acquainted, relating at all to the subject, consist of a casual remark in one of the military

¹ The Manners and Customs of the Romans, p. 287.

epistles of Aurelian; two incidental legal observations contained in the law writings of Modestinus, and in the Codex of Justinian; an allusion by Vegetius to the medical care and expense of the sick in Camp; and an expression by Galen as to the opportunities for anatomical observation presented to the physicians during the German wars.

The reference to the medical superintendence of the army by Aurelian, occurs in Vopiscus' Life of that Emperor (chap. vi.). In issuing some peremptory orders regarding the discipline of the army, after enumerating various rigid rules which the soldiers were to observe, Aurelian concludes with the following admonition and announcement:—"Let each soldier aid and serve his fellow; let them be cured gratuitously by the physicians (*a medicis gratis curentur*); let them give nothing to soothsayers; let them conduct themselves quietly in their hospitia; and he who would raise strife, let him be lashed."¹ The date of this order is not earlier than A.D. 270, the year when Aurelian became Emperor.

When treating of those who, by absence from Rome, etc., were exempted from some burthens and taxes, the jurist, Modestinus, who wrote in the earlier half of the third century, mentions, among others, the military physicians (*Medici Militum*), "because," he adds, "the office which they fill is beneficial to the public, and ought not to be productive of any injury to themselves (*quoniam officium, quod gerunt, et publice prodest, et fraudem eis adferre non debet.*")²

In Justinian's Corpus Juris Civilis, Lib. x., Tit. 52, drawn up in the sixth century, there is a series of laws, "De Professoribus et Medicis." The first of these laws exempts the Physician of a Legion (*Medicum Legionis*) from civil duties when he is absent in the public service.³

¹ Scriptores Historiæ Romanæ, Tom. ii., p. 402. (Heidelberg edition of 1743.)

² Corpus Juris Civilis Digestorum, Lib. iv., Tit. vi., Leg. 33, Sec. 2, p. 142. (Leyden Edit., 1652).

³ "Cum te Medicum Legionis secundæ adjutricis esse dicas, munera civilia quandiu reipublicæ causa abfueris, suspicere non egeris. Cum autem abesse

In his work, *De Re Militari*, Vegetius, who wrote towards the end of the fourth century, devotes a chapter (Lib. iii. 2) to the regulation of the health of an army; and incidentally rather than directly alludes to the cure of sick soldiers by the skill of the physicians (*arte medicorum*).¹ Enumerating also elsewhere the duties

desieris, post finitam eo jure vacationem, si in eorum numero es, qui ad beneficia medicis concessa pertinent, ea immunitate uteris.—*Ibid.* Lib. x. ; Tit. 52, p. 855.

¹ The whole chapter of Vegetius “*Quemadmodum sanitas gubernetur exercitus*,” etc., is so interesting that I will take the liberty of here quoting it in full:—“Now (what is to be most specially attended to), I will give directions how the health of an army is to be preserved, in as far as regards places for encampment, waters, temperature, medicine, and exercise. With respect to places, the soldiers should not remain long near unhealthy marshes nor in arid situations that are destitute of the shades of trees; nor on hills without tents in summer. They ought not to be late in the day in commencing their march, lest they contract disease from the heat of the sun and the fatigue of their journey; and, indeed, in summer, they had better arrive at their destination before the morning is advanced. In severe weather they should not pursue their journey through snow and ice at night; nor be allowed to suffer from scarcity of fuel, or a deficient supply of clothing. For the soldier who is obliged to endure cold is neither in a fit state for enjoying health, or for marching. Nor should he make use of unwholesome nor of marsh waters. For a draught of bad water induces, like a poison, disease in those who drink it. And, moreover, in this case, the unremitting diligence of the generals, tribunes, and their assistants, as wielding the highest authority, will be required, so that their sick comrades may be restored by seasonable articles of food, and be cured by the skill of the physicians (*arte medicorum*). For it is difficult to manage with those who are at one and the same time oppressed with the evils of disease and of war. But those who are skilled in military affairs have held that daily exercise contributes more to the health of the soldiers than the physicians do. Wherefore, they have advised that the foot soldiers should be regularly exercised during seasons of rain and snow under cover, and at other seasons openly. In like manner, they have ordered that the horsemen should assiduously exercise themselves and their horses, not only on level ground, but also in steep places, and in parts rendered difficult by wide ditches, so that nothing new or strange may occur to them in this respect during the casualties of battle. From all this may be inferred, how much the more diligently an army ought to be trained in the exercise of arms, seeing, as we do, that the habit of labour procures alike health in the camp and victory in the battle-field. If (Vegetius adds) a multitude of soldiers be permitted during the summer or autumn seasons to remain long in the same locality, from the corruption of the water, and the stench of their filth, the atmosphere is rendered insalubrious, their respiration

of the Præfect of the Camp, he states that his authority extended over his sick fellow-soldiers, and the physicians who had the care of them, and he regulated the expenses relative thereto (Lib. ii., cap. 10).

The passage I have alluded to as existing in the works of Galen, is of an earlier date than any of the preceding, and is to be found in Liber iii., cap. 2, of his work, "De Compositione Medicamentorum per Genera." In there discoursing regarding the treatment of wounds, he talks of the necessity of a knowledge of human anatomy for their proper management. In order to know the anatomy of man, he recommends here, as elsewhere, the anatomy of the monkey to be studied, maintaining that without such knowledge you cannot take due advantage of the opportunities that you may accidentally have presented to you of becoming acquainted with the anatomical structure of human bodies. And he adds, that in consequence of a want of this knowledge the physicians (*οἱ ἰατροί*) employed in the German wars, and having the power of dissecting the bodies of the barbarians, did not learn more than the cooks understand.¹

This paragraph, though indistinct as regards the status and office of these *ἰατροί*, is still sufficiently explicit as to the fact that there were physicians in the Roman army during the German wars that Galen alludes to; and these wars, were no doubt, those that occurred from the year A.D. 167 to 175, immediately previous to the time when Galen wrote the work from which we have quoted.

The history of other more ancient governments than that of Rome is not without allusion to the office of army physicians.

becomes vitiated, and most dangerous disease is engendered; and this cannot be remedied by any other means than by a change of encampment."—*De Re Militari*, III. 2.

¹ Galeni Omnia Opera, Ed: Kühn, vol. xiii., p. 604. Celsus speaks of the possibility of studying human internal anatomy by looking at the wounds of soldiers, etc. "Interdum enim gladiatorem in arena, vel militem in acie, vel viatorem a latronibus exceptum sic vulnerari, ut ejus interior aliqua pars aperiat."—*De Medicina*, Lib. i., p. 8.

Homer,¹ Herodotus,² and Pliny,³ each comment on the number and fame of the medical men with which the kingdom of Egypt abounded. Diogenes Laertius, in his account of Plato, tells us of Plato's sickness when travelling in Egypt; and adds that he remarked, like Homer, that the Egyptians were all physicians (*φαναι παντας ἀνθρώπους Ἀιγυπτίους ἰατροὺς εἶναι*⁴). They had, moreover, paid medical officers attendant upon their troops in war. For in describing the status and character of the Egyptian physicians, Diodorus Siculus specially mentions that, when engaged in military expeditions, the soldiers were cured without fees, for the physicians of the army received a salary from the state.⁵

One instance is referred to in history in which an Egyptian king, when thrown from his horse in battle, wounded and speechless from injury of the head, had his skull trepanned by his surgeons. I allude to Ptolemy Philometor, who defeated Alexander Balas, the pretender to the throne of Syria, in the year B.C. 146. According to Livy, the victor himself died after the battle during the attempts of his surgeons to relieve him. "Ptolomaeus, in caput graviter vulneratus, inter curiationem, dum ossa medici *terebrare* contendunt, exspiravit."—(*Epit. Lib. lii.*)

Nor is the old classical literature of Greece without reference to surgical services tendered to the soldier in war. Homer describes the double character of army surgeons and warriors as combined

¹ See *Odyssey*, Lib. iv., v. 229, etc.

² *Euterpe*, II., § 84; *Thalia*, III., § 1 and 132.

³ *Historia Naturalis*, Lib. xxvi., c. 1. Pliny states that the Egyptians even prosecuted the study of morbid anatomy by dissection:—"In Ægypto, regibus corpora mortuorum ad scrutandos morbos insecantibus."—Lib. xix., c. 5. Galen advised those who desired, in his day, to become acquainted with human osteology, to repair for that purpose to Alexandria, for this potent reason, that there were two actual human skeletons preserved in that city.—See Kühn's Edit. of Galen, vol. ii., p. 220.

⁴ *De Vitis*, etc., *Clarorum Philosophorum*, Lib. iii., v. viii.

⁵ "In expeditione bellica absque mercede curantur; medici enim annonam ex publico accipiunt."—*Bibliothecæ Historiæ* (Amsterdam Edition of 1746), vol. i., p. 92. Lib. i., § 82.

in the persons of Podalirius and Machaon.¹ And when the latter is wounded, he puts into the mouth of Idomeneus the well-known expression (*Iliad*, lib. xi. v. 514), that the medical man is to the army more valuable than many warriors; knowing as he does how to excise arrows, and to apply soothing medications,—

Ιητρος γαρ ανηρ πολλῶν ἀνταξιος ἄλλων,
 Ἴους τ' ἐκταμνειν, ἐπὶ τ' ἥπια φαρμακα πασσειν.

In the course of the *Iliad*, the surgical treatment followed in individual cases among the disabled Greek warriors is sometimes minutely entered upon; and thus the different modes of operation, by which the transfixing arrow, dart, and lance were, in those early days of surgical science, removed from the bodies of the wounded, may be sometimes gathered from Homer's lucid and minute descriptions. He mentions three different methods, at least, by which war-weapons were extracted; viz., first, by evulsion, or traction of the weapon backwards, as in the case of Menelaus (*Iliad*, Lib. iv., v. 214); secondly, by protrusion, or pushing of the instrument forward, as in the case of Diomedes (v., v. 112); and, thirdly, by enlarging the wound, and cutting out the weapon, as was the practice of Patroclus in the case of Eurypylus (xi., v. 218). I am not aware that Homer ever alludes to any internal medical treatment except once (xi., v. 638), when he mentions a mixture of Pramnian wine, cheese, and flour, as having been administered by the nursing hand of Hecamede to the wounded Machaon.²

The author of the ancient Greek treatise *Περὶ Ἰητροῦ*, an essay

¹ It has been suggested by some authorities, but without sufficient grounds, that in practice Machaon exercised only the art of surgery, while Podalirius followed the art of medicine. Hence, it is argued, Agamemnon, when Menelaus was wounded, did not send for Podalirius, but Machaon. Arctinus, one of the early cyclic poets, takes this view.—See Welcker's *Cyclos Epicus*: “*Ilii Excidium Arctini*,” xiii., 2.

² See Eustathius' *Commentarii in Homeri Iliadem*, *loc. cit.*; and Dr Adams' *Paulus Ægineta*, vol. ii., p. 426. Plato, in his “*Republic*,” discourses as to whether the potion of Pramnian wine, etc., given to Machaon (whom by mistake he names Eurypylus), was not too inflammatory in its character. (*I. lib. iii., c. 14*).

usually included in the works of Hippocrates, explicitly advises the young physician to attach himself for a time to some army, in order to learn the best methods of extracting war-weapons, and to acquire practical skill in the treatment of accidents.¹

Xenophon alludes in various parts of his works to physicians or surgeons connected with the Greek armies. In describing the laws of the Lacedemonians, as instituted in the earliest ages of Greek history by Lycurgus, he incidentally mentions that physicians were attached to the Spartan army. For in the arrangements previously laid down for the troops before a battle, it was ordered that there should be placed behind the station occupied by the King several officials, and among others the soothsayers or priests, the physicians, the minstrels, the leaders of the army, and any persons who were voluntarily present in the expedition (και μάντιες, και ιατροί, και αὐληται, οἱ τοῦ στρατοῦ ἀρχοντεῖς, και ἐθελουσιαι ἦν τινες πατρῴσιν).

Again, in his celebrated account of the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks, Xenophon states that at the conclusion of the fifth day of their march, and after considerable skirmishing with the troops of Tissaphernes, "they appointed eight physicians, for there were many persons wounded."² (*Anabasis*, Lib. iii. c. 4, § 30).

¹ The treatise in question, though usually printed amongst the Hippocratic works, is not admitted to be genuine by any of the translators or commentators upon Hippocrates, with the exception of Foes.—See Dr Adams' *Works of Hippocrates*, p. 121.

² Xenophon's expression (ἰατροὺς κατέστησαν ὀκτώ), has been supposed by some commentators to indicate that eight soldiers, perhaps previously experienced to some extent in tending the wounded, were selected and improvised into medical officers, rather than that eight were chosen out of a greater number of medical attendants present with the army. But, in all probability there were present among the ten thousand Greeks more than eight men who professed the imperfect medical knowledge pertaining to the surgeons of that day. In a later part of the *Anabasis* (v. 8), Xenophon, in defending himself against accusations of alleged severity on his part, in the course of the retreat, to some of the soldiers under his command, argues for its necessity on the principle that "physicians also use incisions and caustics for the good of their patients." He owns to having urged some, when themselves unwilling, to continue their march towards the shores of the Black Sea, through the cold and snows of Armenia,

Lastly, in his semi-historical or political romance—the *Cyropædia*—(Lib. i. 6, § 15), Xenophon makes his young royal hero, Cyrus, the founder of the Persian monarchy, speak, among other matters, of the importance of medical officers being attached to armies. “With respect to health” (says Cyrus), “having heard and observed that cities that wish health choose physicians, and that commanders, for the sake of their soldiers, take physicians; so, when I was placed in this command, I immediately attended to this point; and I believe that I have men with me that are very skilful in the art of physic.” In the same work Xenophon subsequently describes Cyrus as commending to the professional services and care of his medical officers, the Chaldeans* who had been wounded and captured in fight with him.—(*Instit. Cyri.*, Lib. iii., c. 2, § 12).

Few individual instances are recorded in Greek history of surgical aid being afforded on the field of battle. One of the most interesting examples is that mentioned by Quintus Curtius in reference to Alexander the Great at the taking of the capital of the Oxydraceæ, or Mallians. The Macedonian King, who had leaped down, almost alone, within the walls of the fortress, was struck with a long arrow (*duorum cubitorum sagitta*), which entered the right side of the thorax (*per thoracem paulum super latus dextrum infingeretur*). The wound produced great hæmorrhage and faintness. Alexander was carried on his shield to his tent; and the shaft of the arrow being cut off and his cuirass removed, it was discovered that the head of the arrow was barbed, and could not, consequently, be removed without the artificial dilatation of the wound and imminent danger from increased bleeding; for the large weapon was fixed in its situation, and seemed to have penetrated into the internal viscera (*quippe ingens telum adactum erat, et penetrasse in viscera videbatur*). At Alexander’s request, the surgeon Critobulus, undertook the extraction, enlarged the wound, and removed the arrow-

“because,” says he, “sitting down and rest made the blood to congeal, and the toes to rot off, which was the case of a great many,”—a result that lately happened only too frequently to the soldiers of our own armies on the opposite or Crimean shores of the Euxine.

head, which, according to Plutarch, was "three fingers broad and four long." Great hæmorrhage (*ingens vis sanguinis*) attended the operation; death-like insensibility supervened; and, when the flow of blood continued in despite of the medicaments (*medicamenta*) applied, a cry and wail was set up by those around, that the king was dead. At last, however, the hæmorrhage stopped, under the state of syncope. That very syncope, observes Arrian, saved his life; and Alexander gradually recovered. But every modern surgeon must admire the boldness, not less than the expertness, of Critobulus, when he reflects for a moment on the fearful peril attendant on such an operation, performed on so august a patient,—and at a time, too, when surgical science as yet possessed no certain means of restraining surgical hæmorrhage.¹

In the earlier periods of Roman history and Roman warfare, the

¹ De Rebus Gestis Alexandri Magni, Lib. ix., cap. 18. In Lib. iv. cap. 25, an account is given of the extraction of an arrow from the king's shoulder, by the surgeon Philip of Aearnania, who had previously cured Alexander of the attack of fever which followed on his bathing, when overheated, in the cold waters of the Cydnus. Curtius speaks (iii. 13) of Philip as one "inter nobiles medicos," who were present with the army. When describing the well-known incident of the fever draught given by this physician Philip to Alexander, Arrian speaks of him, not as a medical attendant upon the king, but as one "in whose extraordinary skill in physic Alexander had great confidence, because of his success in the camp," or in attending upon other members of the army.—(Lib. ii., cap. 4). Alexander himself affected some knowledge of medicine. At least, when Craterus was invalided, and Pausanias, the physician in attendance upon him, proposed to give him a dose of hellebore, Alexander (as we are informed by Plutarch) wrote a letter to Pausanias, expressing his great anxiety about the ease, and desiring him to be cautious in the use of this medicine.—In Alexander's own chest wound, as detailed in the text above, the head of the arrow possibly did not enter the cavity of the thorax, as its point was, according to Plutarch's account, fixed in the bone (the scapula or a rib?).—When Julius Cæsar fell under the daggers of his assassins, out of the twenty-three wounds which he received, there was none that was mortal, in the opinion of the surgeon Antistisius, except the second, a penetrating wound of the breast. (See Suetonius' *Julius*, c. 82).—After Epaminondas was fatally wounded at the battle of Mantinea, he refused to allow the iron of the spear, with which he was struck, to be extracted till the victory was decided—aware that, from its site, death from bleeding would immediately follow,—an event which the result confirmed.—(Cornel. Nepos, Lib. xv., c. 9).

treatment of the military sick and wounded was, in all probability, trusted to the casual care of some fellow-soldiers whose tastes and inclinations had led them to pay more than usual care to the rude surgery which existed at the time.¹ As early, however, as the commencement of the Christian era, we find Celsus laying down distinct, and in many instances very excellent and practical precepts for the extraction of war-weapons from the bodies of the wounded²—as of arrows, spears, leaden bullets (*glandes plumbeæ*), etc.

Occasionally the weapons used in ancient war seem to have been forged for the special purpose of rendering their extraction by the surgeon a matter of difficulty and danger. At least we find Paulus Ægineta complaining that some of them have “their barbs diverging in opposite directions, like the forked lightning, in order that, whether pulled or pushed, they may fasten in the parts.”³

Still, let me repeat, neither in Celsus nor in Paulus Ægineta, nor, indeed, in any other ancient medical work, have we, as far as I know, any allusion to the circumstance of surgeons or physicians being regularly appointed as army medical officers in the Roman army, for the purpose of superintending the treatment of the wounded, or—what is of still greater importance—in order to take

¹ At the famous battle at the Lake Regillus, fought 497 years before the commencement of the Christian era, Livy tells us that after Titus Herminius slew Mamilius, he was himself struck with a javelin while stripping the body of his enemy; and on being brought back to the camp victorious, he died on the first dressing of his wound (*inter primam curationem expiraverit*).—Livy's *Historiarum Libri*, Lib. ii., cap. xx. It is not, however, stated whether this cure of the wound was attempted by the hand of a military comrade, or by that of a surgeon. The same historian mentions that a few years later (B.C. 483), after the battle in which the Romans defeated the Hetrurians, the surviving consul, M. Fabius, distributed his wounded soldiers for the purpose of cure among the senators residing in Rome (*saucios milites curandos dividit patribus*).—See Livy, Lib. ii., cap. xlvii. And Tacitus, when describing the catastrophe resulting from the fall of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ, in the reign of Tiberius, states that those injured and wounded by the accident, were received into the houses of the citizens, and there carefully attended to, as (he adds) was the custom in former times after great battles (*veterum institutis similis, qui magna post proelia saucios largitione et cura sustentabant*).—*Annal.*, Lib. iv., c. 63.

² See Lib. vii., cap. v. “*Telorum ejectione*.”

³ Dr Adams' Translation, Book VI., § lxxxviii., vol. ii., p. 418.

professional care of the soldiers disabled by sickness and disease, and whose number in warfare is generally very much greater than the number of those that are disabled in fight.

Modern military experience has, in many instances, proved the high importance of the services and superintendence of a medical military staff; and not so much in reference to the care of individual cases, and the cure of the wounded, as in reference to the general health and consequent general strength and success of whole armies. In fact, in war the devastations produced by sickness and disease have often been found greatly more formidable and fatal than any devastations produced by the sword; fevers, dysenteries, and other distempers of the camp, have carried off far more soldiers than the ball or bayonet; malarious and morbid agency has sometimes terminated a campaign as effectually as the highest military strategy; and armies have occasionally, in later times, been as completely destroyed by the indirect ravages of disease as by the direct effects of battle.

Nor was the experience of the Roman armies in this respect different from our own. When the Emperor Septimius Severus determined to subdue the whole of Scotland, he, about the year 208, led, according to Herodian and Dion Cassius,¹ an army of not less

¹ Xiphilin gives the following account from Dion Cassius of the various difficulties and disasters encountered by Severus, from the rivers, marshes, woods, stratagems, etc., of the Caledonians:—"Severus wishing to reduce the whole island under his power, entered into Caledonia, and, in marching through it, encountered the greatest difficulties; for he had to cut down woods, make roads over mountains, mounds across the marshes, and bridges over the rivers. He fought no battle, nor did he ever meet with the forces of the enemy in array; but they advisedly placed sheep and oxen in the way of our troops, so that when our soldiers attempted to seize the booty, and were thus drawn far from the line of march, they were easily cut off. The waters and lakes, likewise, were destructive to our men, as by dividing them they fell into the ambuscades prepared for them; and when they could not be brought off, they were slain by their comrades, that they might not fall into the hands of the enemy. Owing to these causes there died not less than fifty thousand of our troops."—Xiphilin's *Excerpta*, p. 305. Severus himself seems to have suffered in his health during this Scottish campaign; for during the most of it, he required, says Dion, to be carried, on account of his weakness, in an open litter (*nam plurimum propter imbecilitatem operta lectica vehebatur*, p. 305.) Both Dion (p. 307) and Herodian (p. 153) mention that he was disabled by gout.

than 80,000 men across the Forth, marched them north, apparently as far as the Moray Frith, and thence returned to York. But though, in this course, the Roman Emperor nowhere met the enemy in open fight, he is stated to have lost, in this single campaign, not less than 50,000 of his troops. The marshes, fens, woods, etc., of Caledonia were far more destructive to the Roman invaders, than were the spears, long swords (*ingentes gladii*) and scythed chariots (*corvini*) of its painted, and almost naked, warriors.¹

We know, from the oft-repeated anecdote regarding Arcagathus, as told by Pliny, that, in the early days of republican Rome, the practice of medicine was not encouraged among the inhabitants of the Eternal City. But, in the later periods of the empire, Rome abounded with native and foreign physicians; and, when we find the Roman people exalted in so many branches of art and knowledge, we could not but expect that common experience, and results

¹ Herodian's account of the labours and difficulties of Severus in this campaign, sufficiently indicates the sources of malaria and disease to which his army was subjected, and, at the same time, affords a curious statement regarding the condition and habits of the ancient Caledonians:—"Severus' first care (says Herodian) was to throw bridges across the morasses, that his soldiers might be able to pursue the enemy over the dangerous places, and have the opportunity of fighting on firm ground; for as the greater part of the island is frequently overflowed by the tides, these constant inundations make the country full of lakes and marshes. In these the barbarians swim, or wade through them up to their middle, regardless of mud or dirt, as they always go almost naked; for they are ignorant of the use of clothes, and only cover their necks and bellies with fine plates of iron, which they esteem as an ornament and sign of wealth, and are as proud of it as other barbarians are of gold. They likewise dye their skins with the pictures of various kinds of animals, which is one principal reason for their wearing no clothes, because they are loath to hide the fine paintings on their bodies. But they are a very warlike and fierce people, and arm only with a narrow shield and spear, and a sword hanging by their naked bodies; unacquainted with the use of habergeons and helmets, which they think would be an obstruction to their wading through the ponds and marshes of their country, which, perpetually sending up thick gross vapours, condense the air and make it always foggy."—Hart's *Herodian*, p. 153, 154. Dion Cassius, who lived at the date of Severus' expedition, gives, when describing the expedition, an account of our Caledonian ancestors that is in no degree more flattering. "The Caledonians," says he, "both possess rugged and dry mountains, and desert plains full of marshes. They have neither castles nor towns; nor do they cultivate the ground; but live on their flocks and hunting, and the fruits of some trees; not

like that of Severus, would have suggested to them the propriety of increasing the strength and success of their armies, by having medical men to watch over the health of the soldiers that were fighting in so many different regions around the Roman standards.

Some modern discoveries in Great Britain and elsewhere, show that such a conjecture is not at variance with truth, and that the Roman armies were provided, at all events in the time of the Empire, with a medical staff.

Housesteads, in Northumberland (the ancient Borcovicus), formed one of the principal stations on the great defensive wall which the Emperor Hadrian reared, in the second century, from the Tyne to the Solway. Many Roman remains have been found at Housesteads.¹ Thirty years ago the embellished monumental tablet, represented in the accompanying plate, fig. 1, was discovered among these remains. This tablet was, according to the inscription upon it, raised by the first Tungrian cohort to the memory of their *MEDICUS ORDINARIUS*.² The accompanying plate represents this interesting relic, which is preserved in the Newcastle Museum. The

eating fish, though extremely plenteous. They live in tents, naked, and without buskins. Wives they have in common, and breed up their children in common. The general form of government is democratic. They are addicted to robbery; fight in cars; have small and swift horses. Their infantry are remarkable for speed in running, and for firmness in standing. Their armour consists of a shield, and a short spear, in the lower end of which is a brazen apple, whose sound, when struck, may terrify the enemy. They have also daggers. Famine, cold, and all sorts of labour they can bear, for they will even stand in their marshes, for many days, up to the neck in water, and, in the woods, will live on the bark and roots of trees. They prepare a certain kind of food on all occasions, of which, taking only a bit the size of a bean, they feel neither hunger nor thirst."—Xiphilin's "*Excerpta*," p. 304; and Pinkerton's "*Inquiry into the Early History of Scotland*," vol. i., p. 438.

¹ See Gordon's "Journey through Scotland," p. 75. Bruce, in his work on the "Roman Wall," p. 214, speaks of the ancient city of Borcovicus as likely, when excavated, to prove "the Pompeii of Britain." Stukeley, in a similar spirit, declared it the "Tadmor of Britain."

² It is possible the word may be a contraction for *ordinatus* (appointed), and not for *ordinarius*.

inscription upon the tablet reads as follows, in its contracted and in its extended forms :—

D	M	D[IIS]	M[ANIBUS]
ANICIO		ANICIO	
INGENUO		INGENUO	
MEDICO		MEDICO	
ORD	COH	ORD[INARIO]	COH[ORTIS]
I	TUNGR	[PRIMÆ]	TUNGR[ORUM]
VIX AN XXV		VIX[IT]	AN[NIS] XXV

And I append Mr Bruce's translation of it :—" Sacred to the gods of the shades below. To ANICIUS INGENUUS, Physician in Ordinary of Cohort the first of the Tungrians. He lived twenty-five years."¹

The first Tungrian Cohort, which erected this monument over the grave of their young physician, distinguished itself under Agricola at the battle of the Mons Grampius.² It was afterwards, as we learn from some legionary inscriptions, engaged at Castlecary in erecting there a portion of the more northern Roman wall of Antoninus, which ran from the Forth to the Clyde.³ Subsequently it was stationed at Cramond, near Edinburgh, and there raised an altar to the *Matres Alatervæ et Campestres*.⁴ Still later, this Cohort was stationed in Cumberland; and latterly at Housesteads, in Northumberland, where the monument we allude to, and several others, were erected by them.⁵

¹ The Roman Wall : a Historical, etc., Account of the Barrier of the Lower Isthmus, extending from the Tyne to the Solway, p. 228.

² Vita Agricolæ, cap. 36 (Orelli's Edit., vol. ii., p. 441).

³ Stuart, in his "Caledonia Romana," p. 340, gives a copy of a legionary tablet found at Castlecary, which states that the first Tungrian Cohort had erected 1000 paces (mille passus) of the wall.

⁴ Horsley's "Britannia Romana," p. 205. "Stuart's "Caledonia Romana," p. 164.

⁵ According to Horsley, it was probably under the reign of Marcus Aurelius that the Tungrian Cohort became stationed at Castle-steads, in Cumberland, where they erected an altar to Jupiter. Lastly (he adds), this Cohort settled at Housesteads, where we have six or seven of their inscriptions under four or

The youth of this military physician is remarkable. He died at twenty-five.

The elaborate nature of the carving of this monumental tablet affords the strongest evidence of the esteem and respect in which this young physician was held by his Cohort. In fact, it is more ornamented than many of the altars raised by this and other Cohorts to the worship of their gods.

It has been suggested by Mr O'Callaghan¹ that the animal represented on the monument is a hare, and that it was selected as an emblem characteristic of the watchfulness of the profession to which ANICIUS INGENUUS belonged. In his admirable work on the Roman Wall, the Rev. Mr Bruce describes, more correctly, the figure to be that of a rabbit; and he further conjectures that it had some reference to the worship of Priapus. The whole device is, in all probability, far more simple in its signification. The *cuniculus*, or rabbit, when found on ancient Roman monuments and coins, is generally held by archæologists and numismatists as the recognised emblem of Spain,² as, for example, on the coins of Sextus Pompey and Galba; and the circular bucklers or *cetræ* which are placed on this tablet, on either side of the animal, are equally strong characteristics of the same country. Indeed, there can be little or no doubt that these devices indicate merely that this young military physician was of Spanish birth and origin.

Several monumental and votive tablets have been discovered in other parts of the old Roman world, affording further evidence of the Roman troops being provided with a medical staff. In Gruter's great work on Roman inscriptions, there are copies of at least three inscriptions, in which physicians of cohorts (*medici cohortum*) are mentioned.³ One of these inscriptions (p. 219, 3) bears the name

five different commanders. Here they seem to have continued till the lowest time of the empire. The "Notitia" places this Cohort at Boreovicus (Housesteads).—*Britannia Romana*, p. 89.

¹ United Service Journal for 1841, vol. iii., p. 124.

² See Eckhel's *Doctrina Nummorum Veterum*, vol. i., p. 8, and vol. vi., p. 495.

³ *Inscriptiones Romanæ*, p. 68, fig. 1; and fig. 2; and p. 269, fig. 3.

of a physician who had the same *nomen gentilicium* as the medical officer of the Tungrian Cohort who died at Honsesteads, viz., "M. JULIUS INGENUUS MEDIC. COH. II. VIG." The tablet, which was found at Rome, contains a votive imperial inscription from twelve or thirteen persons, and among others, from the physician to the second "Cohors Vigilum." Another of the inscriptions of Gruter is specially interesting in relation to its date, for it was cut at the commencement of the reign of Domitian,¹ and in the year of the consulship of F. Flavius Sabinus, which year chronologists know to have been the eighty-third of the Christian era. We are, consequently, afforded evidence by this inscription that before the end of the first century, at least,—however much earlier,—medical officers were appointed to the Cohorts of the Roman army. The inscription itself is upon an altar or votive tablet, dedicated by SEXTUS TITIUS ALEXANDER, physician of the fifth Prætorian Cohort, to Æsculapius, and the safety of his fellow-soldiers. A copy of this altar and its inscription is given in the accompanying plate, fig. 2. The stone seems to have been found at Rome.

Another altar, discovered also at Rome, and inscribed in the same terms to Æsculapius, is given by Gruter (p. 68, 2). In this instance, the dedicator is SEXTUS TITIUS, medical officer to the sixth Prætorian Cohort, and¹ he erects it for the health of the fellow-soldiers of his Cohort, in conformity with a vow which he had undertaken. The whole inscription is as follows:—

ASCLEPIO ET. SALUTI
COMMILITIONUM COH. VI. PR.
VOTO. SUSCEPTO
SEX. TITIUS. MEDIC. COH.
VI. PR.
D. D.

¹ The name of Domitian (see the plate) is erased from the inscription—a practice which has been followed sometimes in relation to the names of other Roman tyrants besides him; but the name of the consul on the stone fixes the date and reign.

Long ago Reines published in his *Syntagma Inscriptionum* (611, 7),¹ a tablet found at Rome, and erected by TITUS CLAUDIUS JULIANUS, Clinical Physician to the fourth Prætorian Cohort, to himself, to his wife Tullia Epigone, and to their freedmen and freedwomen.

D. M.

TI CLAUDIUS IULIANUS

MEDICUS. CLINICUS. COH. IIII.

PR. FECIT. VIVOS. SIBI ET

TULLIÆ. EPIGONE. CONIUGI

LIBERTIS. LIBERTATIBUS EORUM

H. M. H. N. S.

Muratori in his *Thesaurus*,² cites a Roman sepulchral tablet discovered at Veterbi, and containing an inscription by a father to his deceased son, M. VULPIUS SPORUS, Physician to the Indian and Asturian Auxiliaries. (*Medico Alarum Indianae et tertiae Astorum.*)³

The tablets to which I have hitherto alluded all refer, with the doubtful exception of the first and last, to one rank of medical military men, namely, the surgeons of cohorts (*Medici Cohortum*). It is generally believed that each cohort consisted of about 500 or 600 men; though this appears to have varied at different times. From the preceding tablets, each cohort seems to have been provided with at least one medical officer, if not more. For the distinctive terms “Ordinarius” and “Clinicus,” which occur in the first and last of the preceding inscriptions, when added to the usual term

¹ See also Spon's *Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*, 145, 16; and Dr Middleton's *Dissertation “De Medicorum apud veteres Romanos conditione,”* in his *Works*, vol. iv., p. 103.

² *Novus Thesaurus vet. Inscriptionum*, 1046, 5.

³ In the text, I have given the reading of this puzzling inscription, suggested by Hultmann, in his *Miscellanea Epigraphi*, cap. 415, the letters referring to the corps to which SPORUS was attached, being very indistinct—namely, “*Medicoalar indianae etheriac astorum.*” The inscription, if Hultmann's suggestion be correct, indicates the third wing or cohort of the Asturian or Spanish auxiliaries. The first and second wings of the Astures (*Astorum*), and the first cohort of them are mentioned in the celebrated “*Notitia imperii*” as located at the time at which

“*Medicus Cohortis*,” apparently tend to indicate a different grade or rank of medical officer from the latter.

Whether, however, or not there were different grades among the Roman *Medici Cohortum*, we have sufficient evidence for proving that there existed in the Roman army a higher rank of medical officer than these,—namely, *Medici Legionum*. The Roman legion consisted of ten cohorts.¹ We have seen that the individual cohorts of which the legion was composed, were each provided with a medical officer or officers. I have already cited a law from Justinian’s Codex, showing further that there were military physicians to the Roman legions. The evidence of monumental tablets affords additional proof, that over the whole legion, another, and in all probability a superior medical officer, was placed. More than one monumental tablet has been discovered, dedicated not to the *Medicus Cohortis*, but to the *Medicus Legionis*. Thus, Maffei in his *Museum Veronense* gives the inscription of a tablet raised by Scribonia Faustina to the manes of her very dear husband, L. CÆLIUS ARRIANUS, physician to the Second Italian Legion, who died at the age of forty-nine years and seven months. The inscription in the original runs as follows:—

D M
L. CAELI ARRIANI
MEDICO. LEGIONIS
II. ITALIC. QUI. VIX. ANN
XXXXVIII. MENSIS VII.
SCRIBONIA FAUSTINA
CONIUGI KARISSIMO.²

that army-list was made out, at three different military stations along the line of Hadrian’s wall from the Tyne to the Solway ; and various inscriptions raised by these troops have been dug up in Northumberland and Cumberland. See Dr Bruce’s Work, p. 47, 110 and 154. These English slabs all read *Astorum*, instead of the *Astorum* of the Notitia, and of the Italian inscription referred to in the text. Let me add that inscriptions referring to soldiers of the Ala Indiana or Indian wing of auxiliary horsemen, have also been found in England.—See an example in Mr Akerman’s Archaeological Index, p. 67, and Messrs Buckmann and Newmarch’s *Corinium*, p. 115.

¹ “In Legione sunt Cohortes decem.”—*Cincius in Aulus Gellius*, xvi. 4.

² Gruter’s *Inscriptiones Romanae*, Tom i., p. 633, fig. 5. The exact age of

In the *Collectio Inscriptionum* (Vol. i., No. 448) of Hugenbach and Orelli, there is published another Roman tablet found in Switzerland (at Gebistorf, near Windisch), bearing the name of a Legionary physician. The inscription states that Atticus Patronus erected this tablet to TITUS CLAUDIUS HYMNUS, physician to the twenty-first Legion, and to Claudia Quieta, his wife.¹

TI CLAVDIO HYMNO
MEDICO LEG XXI.
CLAVDIÆ QUIETÆ EIUS
ATTICUS PATRONUS.

Orelli gives in the same work (Vol. ii., No. 4996), another tablet found at Salon, in which a third physician to a legion is named; the tablet being erected by M. BESIVS TERTULLUS, physician of the eleventh Legion, to the memory of his "hospes," Papiria Pyrallis.

I have already alluded to a passage in Vegetius, showing in relation to the government of the Roman medical staff, that the medical officers as well as their patients, were both placed under the control of the Praefect of the Camp, to whose multifarious duties, these among other matters pertained. "Praeterea aegri contubernales, et medici a quibus curantur, expensae etiam ad ejus industriam pertinebant."² Vegetius does not allude to the existence of any

the dead, not as to years only, but as to months, as in the above tablet, and sometimes even as to days, is a feature peculiar to Roman monumental inscriptions. And nothing appears to us more strange and interesting in relation to Roman monumental tablets, than their total or almost total silence as to a future state and the possibility of meeting beyond the grave. Out of the almost innumerable Roman monumental inscriptions that have now been copied and published, not one, as far as I am aware, ventures to refer to the hope of a future life. They seem to have looked upon the idea of a future state of existence as poetical imagery only, and not reality; all doubting, like Tacitus, "si quis piorum manibus locus; si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore exstinguuntur magnae animae."—*Vita Agricolae*, cap. 46.

¹ There is, at the end of the third line, an evident ellipsis of the word *Uxoris*. It is scarcely necessary to add that, as is well-known, these old Roman inscriptions abound in errors of orthography and grammar.

² De Re Militari, Lib. ii., cap. 10.

sick-quarters special, but a writer of the second century, who lived under Trajan and Hadrian, Hyginus Gromaticus, in his essay "De Castrametatione,"¹ in laying down the proportions and measurements of the different parts of a Roman camp, describes the proper situation in it for the Hospital or "Valetudinarium." This observation of Hyginus is interesting as far as regards the probable date of the first institution of Camp Hospitals; for we have no allusion to them in Polybius' earlier account of the different points and parts of a Roman camp of his day; and even in the first century of our era, when Tacitus describes Germanicus as visiting and encouraging the wounded soldiers under his command, he uses such an expression, "circumire saucios" as to lead to the supposition, that the invalids in the Roman camp were still, like the old Homeric heroes, laid up in their own tents.² Indeed, Lampridius speaks of the Emperor Alexander Severus in the third century, still visiting his sick soldiers in their tents (*aegrotantes ipse visitavit per tentoria milites*).³ Let me add, that medical stores appear, as we might expect, to have been carried with the imperial armies. At least, in the war conducted by Germanicus against Arminius, we are told by Tacitus, that in one of their contests with the German army, the Roman troops lost their intrenching tools, tents, and remedies or dressings for the wounded (*fomenta sauciis*);⁴ and subsequently we find Agrippina, the wife of the Roman general, distributing gratuitously among the soldiers, clothes to the needy, and dressings to the wounded (*militibusque, ut quis inops aut saucius, vestem et fomenta dilargita est*).⁵ We have the transport of the wounded sick sometimes spoken of; as for example, when Tempanius leads back his victorious troops from the Volscian war;⁶ but the only instance in which, as far as I remember, any special description of ambulance is mentioned, occurs in Hirtius' Commentaries, where he tells us that, after the battle fought near Ruspina, Labienus ordered his wounded to be carried to Adrumentum, bound in waggons (*san-*

¹ Graevius' Thesaurus, vol. x., p. 1021. ² Annal., Lib. i., cap. 71.

³ Scriptores Historiæ Romanæ, Tom. ii. p. 355.

⁴ Annal., Lib. i., cap. 65.

⁵ Ibid., cap. 69.

⁶ Livy, Lib. iv., cap. 39.

cios suos jubet in plostris deligatos Adrumentum deportari)¹. The passage should more probably read “ plostris decubitos.”

The remarks which I have hitherto made refer only to the medical staff and organization of the Roman army. If, however, as the preceding facts tend to show, the Roman troops were furnished with a medical staff, there is *a priori* every probability that the Roman fleet was similarly provided. The contingencies, however, of a naval, as compared with a military life, render the preservation of such monumental proofs as we have already adduced in relation to the existence of army medical officers, much less likely in relation to the existence of medical officers in the fleet. Indeed, I am only aware of the discovery of one ancient tablet referring to the naval medical service. In his late splendid work on the Latin inscriptions found in the kingdom of Naples, Mommsen has given a careful copy of the tablet in question.² The inscription upon it was first I believe, published by Marini.³ The tablet itself, which is now placed in the antiquarian collection at Dresden, was originally discovered in the Elysian fields, near Baiae; and consequently in the vicinity of the famous *Pontus Julius*, and the station of the imperial Misenian fleet. The inscription on the stone bears that M. SATRIUS LONGINUS, physician to the three-banked ship or trirem,

¹ De Bello Africano, cap. xxi. The exigencies of war sometimes converted the stronger soldiers into the only available transport corps for the sick and wounded. Xenophon speaks in the *Anabasis* (Lib. iii., cap. iv.), of the number of Greeks capable of fighting being diminished, because some soldiers were employed in carrying the wounded, and others in carrying the arms of the latter. One anecdote subsequently told by Xenophon, seems to show that occasionally, at least, if not as the common rule, one soldier was deemed capable of carrying a sick or wounded companion. For he informs us, that towards the end of the expedition, when publicly accused of being sometimes too severe to the soldiers during the long retreat of the Greeks, the only person who came forward to substantiate the charge, was a soldier whom he had compelled to carry a sick comrade, and who, it turned out, had subsequently dug a pit to bury the invalid before he was completely dead. The army held that Xenophon had not beaten the complainant so much as he actually deserved for this conduct.—*Anabasis*, Lib. v., cap. 8.

² Inscriptiones Regni Neapolitani Latinæ, No. 2701.

³ Atti e Monumenti de fratelli Arvali, vol. ii., p. 826.

the CUPID,¹ and those, or the heirs of those freed by Julia Venerias, his wife, erected the tablet to the manes of this deserving lady.

D. M
IVLIAE VENERIÆ.
M. SATRIUS LONGIN
MEDIC. DVPL. III. CVPID
ET. IVLIA VENERIA LIBER
HER. BEN. MER
FECER

In the preceding inscription LONGINUS is designated *Medicus Duplicarius*. The term *duplicarius* in this as other inscriptions signifying that, by the length or superiority of his service, he was entitled to double pay and rewards. The “duplex stipendium” and “duplex frumentum” is repeatedly alluded to by Livy, Virgil, and other classical authors as a military reward accorded to the more deserving soldiers and officers of the army; and the corresponding adjective “*duplicarius*” not unfrequently occurs in old Roman inscriptions.

In a previous page, it has been stated that nowhere in the Roman classics does there exist any distinct allusion to physicians or surgeons as forming a regular part of the staff of the Roman army. There are several references, however, in ancient medical and classical authors to the fact of medical men being placed in professional attendance upon Roman Senators,² Con-

¹ In the fragmentary list of the two old Roman fleets stationed at Misenum and Ravenna, collected from various inscriptions by Mommsen (p. 477), it is not uninteresting to find the ships—sixteen or eighteen centuries ago—bearing names exactly the same as those borne by our modern royal and commercial navies; as The Cupid, The Diana, Mars, Neptune, Ceres, The Fortune (*Fortuna*), The Victory (*Victoria*), The Hope (*Spes*), The Faith (*Fides*), The Triumph (*Triumphus*), Providence (*Providentia*), The Peace (*Pax*), The Tibur (*Tiburis*), The Nile (*Nilus*), etc.

² Thus when Cato the younger, after the battle of Thapsus committed suicide at Utica, by stabbing himself in the abdomen, his friends rushed into his room, on hearing him fall, and among them his attendant physician, Cleanthes, who replaced the uninjured bowels, and began to staunch and sew up the gash. But

suls,¹ and Emperors during the course of their military campaigns. Thus Galen tells us that he himself was summoned in this last capacity to attend upon the Emperors M. Aurelius and L. Verus at Apuleia during their proposed campaign against some of the German tribes.²

Various fragmentary notices exist regarding the physicians who attended upon those Roman Emperors who visited Britain. A medical author (whom Galen often quotes), Scribonius Largus, has left a valued therapeutical work "*De Compositione Medicamentorum*." This work was written, as we are informed in the preface to it, when the author was absent from Rome, and deprived of the greater part of his library. In his *History of Medicine*, Sprengel states, but I know not on what precise authority, that the work in question was composed by Largus when he was absent with the Emperor Claudius during his short campaign into England.³ Our

on recovering from his state of syncope, Cato thrust aside the surgeon, tore asunder the wound, pulled out the entrails, and speedily expired.—(See Plutarch's *Life of him*, and Hirtius' *Commentar. De Bell. Africano*, cap. 88.) Cicero and Seneca have written applaudingly of Cato's suicide. Lucan invests him with all godlike virtues; and various modern writers have spoken in enthusiastic terms of his unbending moral dignity and magnanimity of character. But one anecdote mentioned by Plutarch, seems calculated to detract not a little from our modern estimate of the mental character of this "the last and greatest of the Romans." In stabbing himself, Cato could not, according to Plutarch, strike sufficiently hard to produce an immediately fatal wound, in consequence of inflammation in his hand, which had required to be dressed by Cleanthes; for a few hours before death, Cato, that alleged "paragon of Roman virtue,"—had severely injured his fist by striking one of his slaves in the mouth with it.

¹ The death of Pansa, the consul, at the battle of Mutina, in the year B.C. 48, is detailed by Suetonius and Tacitus in such a way as proves that Glycon attended the army as surgeon to Pansa, and took professional care of the consul when he was wounded. In fact, Glycon was thrown into prison, after Pansa's death, upon a suspicion of having poisoned his wounds.—(See Tacitus' *Annal.*, Lib. i., cap. 10; Suetonius, *Octavius*, cap. 11). M. Brutus, in a letter to Cicero, begs the interference of Cicero in favour of Glycon, and pleads his innocence of the deed imputed to him.—(Cicer. *ad Brut.* 6.)

² Kühn's Edit. of Galen, vol. xiv., pp. 649, 650.

³ *Histoire de la Médecine*, vol. ii., p. 54 (Jourdan's Translation). "Scribonius Largus vivait sous le règne de l'Empereur Claude, qu'il suivit dans ses campagnes d'Angleterre."

countryman, Sir Thomas Browne, makes a similar statement. In his "Hydriotaphia," when discoursing on the want of Roman notices regarding the state, habits, etc., of the ancient Britons, he observes, "We much deplore the loss of that letter which Cicero expected or received from his brother Quintus, as a resolution of British customs; or the accounts which might have been made by Scribonius Largus, the physician, accompanying the Emperor Claudius, who might have discovered that frugal bit of the old Britons (mentioned by Dion) which, in the bigness of a bean, could satisfy their hunger."¹

We have already had occasion to allude to the disasters which attended the Scottish campaign of Severus, and to the imperfect health of the emperor himself during his invasion of Scotland. The evidence of Herodian further shows us that during it he was attended by his own physicians, and that their conduct after the emperor's return from Scotland to York, whilst in the highest degree commendable as regards their faith and duty to the emperor, proved the cause of their own downfall and destruction. The anxiety of Caracalla for the death of his father Severus is well known. We have the testimony of Herodian to the fact, that while the father and son were living at York, Caracalla at one time attempted to destroy his father with his own hand. The same historian further informs us, that the unhappy son attempted to induce the medical attendants of Severus to adopt means to hasten the emperor's death.² He adds further, that in consequence of the

¹ Wilkins' Edition of Browne's Works, vol. iii., p. 467.

² "*Medicis* ministrisque conaretur persuadere, senem ut e medio quam primum quoquo modo tollerent."—Lib. iii., p. 412. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius died in Pannonia, when prosecuting a war against the German tribes. Dion Cassius alludes to the physicians who were in attendance upon Aurelius during this long campaign, when adverting to the report that the emperor's death was caused by them, in order to promote his son and successor, Commodus ("peremptus a *Medicis* qui Commodo gratificabantur."—Excerpta, p. 252). But Capitolinus, the principal authority regarding the biography of Aurelius, does not even advert to the report. On the other hand, he describes Aurelius' fatal illness as one of seven day's duration, and the emperor only dismissed Commodus from his presence on the last day, lest he should communicate the disease

court physicians not complying with his unrighteous request, Caracalla, immediately after the demise of Severus, commenced his reign of bloodshed and terror by putting to death these recusant physicians of the late emperor.¹

In the retrospect, it affords a strange subject of meditation for us in the nineteenth century, to consider that, some fifteen hundred years ago, it thus happened in England, that a number of physicians were themselves doomed to death for refusing to pervert their professional trust so far as to become the murderers of the royal invalid who had confided his health to their care. And the modern physician may look back with some degree of pride upon the fact, that in an age and at a court where cruelty and corruption held unrestrained sway, some members at least of the medical profession remained so uncorruptible as to endanger and sacrifice their own lives rather than tamper with the life of their patient.²

to him. ("Septimo die gravatus est; et solum filium admisit; quem statim dimisit, *ne in eum morbus transiret*"—Scriptores Historiæ Romanæ, vol. ii., p. 298.)

¹ Lib. iii., p. 413. "Nam et *Medicos* supplicio affecit, quod sibi parum obtemperaverant, jubenti senis maturare necem." This, as stated in the text, was one of the first, if not the first, act of cruelty which Caracalla committed after Severus' death. Dion affirms that, after murdering his brother Geta, he ordered about 20,000 of Geta's supposed friends to be put to death; and amongst others, he condemned to death, according to Spartian, a class which is medically not uninteresting—namely, all those who wore amulets or charms about their necks for the cure of agues, a custom which would appear to have been much in use both among the Greeks and Romans.—See Hart's Herodian, p. 177.

² As a further not uninteresting record of the habits of these times, as contrasted with our own, let me add (though the topic is not altogether medical), that after Severus died at York, worn out, according to Herodian, more by grief than by disease (*moerore magis quam morbo consumptus*), his body was burned, and the ashes left by the corpse inclosed in an urn of alabaster with perfumes (*odoribus*).—Herodian, p. 413. His sons, with their own hands, lighted the funeral pile. Dion states that shortly before his death, Severus sent for the urn that was destined to contain his ashes, and addressed it in terms too truly significant of the vanity and emptiness of the highest earthly ambition and the greatest earthly success: "*Tu virum capies quem totus orbis terrarum non cepit.*"—Dion, p. 307.

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